

Bristol Metropolitan Academy

Snowdon Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2HD

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal and her staff care passionately for all the school's pupils. The principal ensures that pupils receive the support they need to thrive and succeed, regardless of background, ability or circumstances.
- Leaders have consistently secured outstanding outcomes, particularly in mathematics and for lower ability and disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils make strong progress as a result of good-quality teaching, the inspiring and aspirational ethos of the school, and the extensive support they receive.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education or for the world of work. Pupils benefit greatly from the quality of their experience at school.
- Teaching does not always challenge some pupils, including the most able, to think at a deeper level and to reach higher standards.
- Leaders ensure that courses and qualifications are very well matched to pupils' strengths and aspirations. For example, many more pupils now follow a curriculum that includes a modern foreign language. Leaders are working hard to ensure that teaching in languages is consistently strong.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a rich and broad diet of skills and knowledge. Pupils enjoy their learning because they follow courses that meet their needs and appeal to their interests.
- Pupils behave well. They are attentive and focused in lessons. During breaktimes and between lessons, they are mostly respectful of each other and move around the school in an orderly way.
- Pupils' well-being is very well supported. This includes excellent work to improve pupils' understanding of risks and dangers to their health.
- Attendance is improving, including for different groups of pupils, and for those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school benefits from extensive, high-quality support from the Cabot Learning Federation and external partners.
- Governance is highly effective. Rigorous accountability measures are in place to support and challenge the principal and her senior team.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that:
 - pupils, including the most able, are challenged to deepen their thinking, engage eagerly in learning and reach higher standards
 - pupils achieve at least in line with their capabilities in modern foreign languages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and senior leaders have created a culture in which all pupils, regardless of background, ability or individual circumstances are equally valued. Pupils are well known to staff, who invest a high level of commitment into ensuring that pupils feel safe, are happy and get the most from their school experience.
- The principal is an inspiring, dynamic and clear-sighted leader. She has only the highest expectations of herself, other staff and pupils. She has established a culture of 'no excuses', where all are encouraged to aim high, even when faced with difficulty. The principal understands that strong leadership is built upon all staff feeling that they have ownership of their work and a stake in the institution. She knows that staff need to feel trusted to innovate and take risks to develop their work further. Consequently, the senior team, middle leaders and individual staff share the principal's values and approach their work with energy and eagerness.
- Leaders are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They take an honest, objective and informed view of the school's work, using detailed performance information, expertise from within the Cabot Learning Federation and external consultants to provide insight.
- Leaders have steadily built up different means of support for pupils, many of whom face challenging circumstances. Pupils come from a range of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and many speak English as an additional language. A large proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. Leaders welcome the diverse nature of the pupil population and take seriously their commitment to know all pupils as individuals. As a result, the extensive range of support for pupils' different academic and pastoral needs enables them to thrive. During their time at the school, pupils learn to become well-rounded citizens who play an active, positive role in their community.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to achieve high outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' specific needs are clearly identified. Strategies are applied on the basis of what suits individual pupils best, informed by research about which are most effective. This secures higher achievement in curriculum subjects and improved attendance, and encourages pupils to participate to a greater extent in the wider life of the school. For example, funding enables pupils to attend extra-curricular visits or trips, and to take advantage of the school's popular breakfast club. The impact of funding is closely monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is being spent in the most effective way.
- Similarly, catch-up funding is used to excellent effect to raise the achievement of pupils who enter the school below the national level of expectation in English and mathematics. The extra support pupils receive in these subjects enables many pupils to make more progress than their peers by the end of Year 7.

- The leadership of teaching is strong. Teachers take advantage of a range of tailored training opportunities to meet their individual needs. These opportunities are provided in-house, so that school staff learn from each other's expertise, from the wider federation and from other external networks. Leaders and the wider staff are keen to 'look outwards' and learn from others. Robust quality assurance processes ensure that the standard of teaching remains generally high. In the small number of cases where performance is weaker, leaders are providing appropriate support and challenge to bring about improved performance.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. This is because it provides pupils with a firm foundation in the core subjects, enabling them to achieve highly in English and mathematics. Additionally, pupils study a range of other subjects that provides breadth to their curriculum. Furthermore, the curriculum is tailored to the interests of pupils. The curriculum in Year 7 is particularly challenging, and effective transition arrangements have ensured that higher achieving pupils have continued to excel.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education or the world of work. The progress they have made during their time in the school speaks of a strong work ethic, resilience and a commitment to self-improvement. By the time pupils leave the school, they are well-rounded individuals. This is because of the safe school environment that has enabled them to develop into respectful, considerate and tolerant young people. Pupils also receive highly effective advice and guidance so that last year there were no pupils who did not go on to some form of education, training or employment.
- The Cabot Learning Federation provides the school with extensive and highly effective support. The executive principal, the chief executive and directors of the board all take a close interest in the performance of the school. They use their informed evaluation to hold the academy council and senior leaders to account. The federation, academy council and senior leaders are all of one mind about what needs to improve. Consequently, the federation quickly sources and provides a range of support to tackle the key issues.

Governance of the school

- Academy councillors, like the school staff, are driven by moral purpose. They take their responsibilities very seriously because they passionately believe that pupils at the school are entitled to the best.
- Senior leaders are stringently held to account by councillors. They use detailed, incisive performance information, the federation's own evaluation work and the findings of external consultants to ask the right questions of senior leaders.
- The chair of the academy council is clear that there is no room for complacency in their assessment of the school's performance. Although there are many strengths and numerous reasons to feel proud of the school's work, the chair knows that work towards further improvement always remains. Councillors are absolutely clear about what that work is, and the actions leaders are taking to tackle it vigorously.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and the wider staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They understand that many pupils are especially vulnerable and know that they must go 'the extra mile' to protect them.
- As a result, leaders have focused heavily on developing a school ethos that celebrates cultural difference, emphasises common humanity and highlights what it is that binds people together. In this way, leaders have explicitly focused on developing pupils' understanding of British values such as tolerance and respect for the rule of law. 'Safety days' provide an intensive opportunity for pupils to engage with hard-hitting social, political and international issues. Whole-school assemblies have been vehicles for reflecting upon major world events and incidents.
- Staff receive regular, appropriate training on the various aspects of child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Leaders and designated safeguarding staff have very strong, effective relationships with external agencies, such as the police, in respect of these issues.
- A designated member of staff ensures that children who are looked after are safe. Where attendance is an issue for these pupils, it is monitored closely so that staff can act speedily and effectively to ensure that pupils' absence from the school does not put them at greater risk.
- All the relevant checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. They understand the school's safeguarding procedures and know how to register any concerns they might have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and effective planning to prepare work that enables pupils to make strong progress. As a result of the enriching training opportunities provided to staff, their expertise continues to develop. Consequently, teachers inform, explain and illustrate with confidence. They have the expertise to correct misconceptions and question pupils effectively.
- Teaching is particularly effective in meeting the needs of lower attaining pupils, including many disadvantaged pupils. The needs and barriers to learning of these pupils are very well understood by staff, and this ensures that teaching is supportive, aspirational and challenging.
- However, some pupils, including the most able, could achieve even more highly. This is because they are sometimes set work that does not challenge them to think at greater depth or does not fully engage them in their learning. Sometimes, pupils' work is 'good enough' rather than 'good and even better'. These are the main reasons why the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet outstanding.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and approach to learning. They establish clear routines so that pupils know what is expected of them. As a result, pupils behave well and exhibit good attitudes to learning. Pupils are well equipped for lessons, follow instructions, stay focused on the task in hand and cooperate well with each other. Sometimes, pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation or completion of their work.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This is because staff know their pupils well and respect them as individuals. Pupils are encouraged to do well and feel motivated by their teachers. Pupils who spoke with inspectors unanimously agreed that they received the help they needed to move forward with their learning.
- Teachers in a range of subjects, not just English, take opportunities to improve pupils' literacy. As a result, pupils of different abilities read fluently and with expression. Pupils enjoy their reading. Many pupils enter the school with little understanding of English. These pupils' reading skills are effectively developed through various support programmes that allow them to make very strong progress.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work. This is because they receive guidance from staff that clearly shows what is good about their work and what would improve it further.
- Homework is effectively used to support pupils' learning. Leaders and staff closely monitor the quality of tasks set and ensure that they build carefully on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders also ensure that pupils who are absent from school, or receiving support elsewhere, complete work that prevents them from falling behind.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- A raft of extensive support measures is in place to support pupils with a range of different needs. Pupils who have very little or no English when they enter the school receive intensive support to improve their reading and writing. Pupils who have behavioural, social or emotional issues benefit from the student support base, which helps them to develop self-esteem and integrate into the wider school. Pupils who require a curriculum that is more personalised to their needs attend alternative provision, such as CLF Engage or the local pupil referral unit.
- All pupils are very well looked after by staff through the 'learning family' pastoral system. Pupils of different ages use 'learning family' time to reflect upon world events, which pose many moral, cultural and spiritual questions. Staff respect and value pupils' different cultural identities. More than this, these are seen as a crucial ingredient underpinning the 'Metropolitan Way', the school's defining set of values.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. They report that bullying is very effectively dealt with by school staff. Any issues reported by pupils receive a prompt response and concerted action to deal with the problem. As one pupil said, 'school sorts it out.' School staff are quick to challenge racism or homophobia. Pupils receive the support they need to feel happy, secure and confident in who they are.

- The school environment is a warm, safe and welcoming place. The building is light and airy and 'The Street', the main thoroughfare through the school, encourages pupils to mix and socialise in a safe, companionable way. Communal spaces and learning environments are engaging and stimulating because they celebrate pupils' richly diverse work.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision at CLF Engage are supported very well. They follow a curriculum that meets their needs and allows them to make strong progress. Strong pastoral support and good links with parents and other agencies, such as The Prince's Trust, enable these pupils to develop a strong sense of personal achievement and pride in their work.
- The school provides pupils with a rich diet of extra-curricular activities and visits out of school to support their learning and general development. Activities encompass a range of disciplines from sport to the creative arts. Activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the CLF basketball, rugby and fencing academies encourage pupils to develop their confidence and resilience, and to have higher expectations of themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around the school site. They navigate corridors and communal areas in a safe, orderly way. Pupils are courteous towards each other. In lessons, pupils are attentive and follow instructions promptly. They respect each other's opinions and listen considerately when others are speaking. However, attitudes to learning are not outstanding because some pupils do not approach their learning in all subjects with the same enthusiasm. Leaders are taking action to ensure that pupils' different needs, or the difficulties they face, are not a hindrance to excellent attitudes to learning.
- Attendance overall and for particular groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, has improved over time. As a result, attendance is now broadly in line with average. This is because staff closely monitor attendance and are quick to follow up absence. They work closely with parents and other agencies to bring about improvement. Pupils spoken to by inspectors reported that the incentives and rewards on offer to improve attendance are positively received.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and wear their uniform smartly. Most pupils also take pride in their work, although the presentation in books is not uniformly neat.
- Exclusions have fallen over time and pupils' behaviour continues to improve. This is because leaders set clear, high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils report that they think the rewards and sanctions system is fair and they feel encouraged to behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Many pupils, particularly lower ability pupils, make excellent progress. The contribution of the ethos and values of the school, combined with an aspirational and ambitious culture, are key ingredients in this success. Staff understand the needs of individual pupils well. In addition to the good teaching they receive, pupils receive carefully tailored and focused support that helps them to move forward rapidly. Leaders have developed a comprehensive range of programmes and strategies to support the learning of pupils with different needs. Furthermore, the support provided by the Cabot Learning Federation is a powerful resource that benefits pupils.
- Outcomes for lower ability pupils in particular are of the very highest quality. This has been consistently the case for a number of years. For example, in the examinations in 2016, the progress made by this group of pupils was in the top 5% of schools nationally. The proportion of lower ability pupils securing grades A*–C in English and mathematics was more than twice the national average for this group. This is a key reason why so many pupils are successful in securing worthwhile destinations when they leave school.
- Similarly, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been consistently strong. This is a result of leaders' determination to ensure equality of opportunity, access, aspiration and achievement. Year on year, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the school has at least matched, and often exceeded, the progress of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils make strong progress across a range of subjects. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where progress in 2016 was in the top 5% of schools in England. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in this subject was even better. Although achievement in other subjects, including English, is not as consistently strong as this, pupils still make progress that is at least good across much of the curriculum. Where progress has not been that strong, such as in modern foreign languages in 2016, leaders are taking swift and robust action to bring about improvement.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They liaise closely to ensure that the support provided for pupils has the maximum impact. Strong and trusting relationships between pupils and staff, learning support expertise and high-quality pastoral care all help to ensure that pupils can succeed. Consequently, these pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make progress that is in line with or better than that made by other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make progress that is in line with that of their peers nationally across a range of subjects. Leaders have rightly identified that some most-able pupils require further challenge to fully realise their potential and reach the highest standards.
- The attainment of pupils continues to rise and complements the strong progress that is made as they move through the school. Their rich experience is founded upon a high level of academic and pastoral support. Pupils receive good-quality teaching, enjoy a vibrant curriculum and receive appropriate, objective guidance about their next steps when they leave school. Moreover, pupils benefit from working with staff who expect much of them and have their best interests at heart. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for when they leave school and are 'up for the challenge' of what lies ahead.

School details

Unique reference number	135959
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10025056

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	836
Appropriate authority	Cabot Learning Federation board of directors
Chair of board of directors	Professor Jane Harrington
Chair of academy council	Sam Lusardi
Principal	Sally Apps
Telephone number	0117 3772071
Website	www.bristolmet.net
Email address	info@bristolmet.net
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school also complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Bristol Metropolitan Academy is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The school is part of the Cabot Learning Federation multi-academy trust which oversees the work of the academy council. The academy council is the local governing body to whom school leaders are accountable.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Nearly half the pupils in the school are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is much higher than average.
- The school has a lower than average proportion of higher attaining pupils than average, although this proportion is increasing year-on-year in key stage 3.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support is in line with the average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- Three pupils attend alternative provision at CLF Engage, which is part of the Cabot Learning Federation. A further three pupils attend the St Mathias Park pupil referral unit and a further three pupils attend hospital education because they are too unwell to attend school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects and across year groups. Many observations were jointly conducted with school staff.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the academy council and both the executive principal and chief executive of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the academy council, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of three responses to the Parent View survey, 17 responses to the pupil survey and 32 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break- and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Maddocks	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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